

Health Ministry Spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari Said on Wednesday That Some 462 More Iranians Have Died From COVID-19 Over the Past 24 Hours Which Is a New Record for Daily Death Toll in the Country

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva Advised the U.S. Government to Punish the Perpetrators of Assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani

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Iran Policies Regarding U.S. to Remain Unchanged

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani says his country's fundamental policies will not change no matter who becomes the next U.S. president.

President Rouhani said on Wednesday that Tehran's policies have remained the same all along, and will remain so in the future.

"Our policies will not change. The Islamic Republic of Iran will pursue the same policy it has had so far," he noted.

The president urged the next U.S. administration to get close to Tehran's policies.

"It is up to the U.S. government to align itself with these policies, or distance itself from them," he noted.

"The administration of the outgoing U.S. president chose to distance itself from our policies. We wanted to fight terrorism, but they wanted to support it. We wanted regional nations to be free and independent, but the US wanted to interfere in their affairs. We wanted peace and stability in the region, but they sought to continue war and sell weapons in the region," President Rouhani explained.

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Azerbaijan-Armenia Peace Deal Based On Iran's Proposal

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior Iranian official says the Russia-brokered peace agreement between the Azerbaijan Republic and Armenia was in keeping with Iran's initiative.

Abbas Araqchi, the Iranian deputy foreign minister for political affairs, said Tehran's proposals contributed heavily to the establishment of the ceasefire.

"Fortunately, the principles and framework that we introduced for a ceasefire and the start of the talks were welcomed, and the Russia-brokered agreement that was finally reached between Azerbaijan and Armenia two days ago, was, in fact, within the framework of the principles and framework and proposals that Iran had put forward," he said.

He reiterated that Iran had misgivings over the military conflict going on near its borders.

"The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis unfolding outside Iran's northern borders had been a cause for serious concern for us," he said.

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Tehran, Islamabad Explore Ways to Bolster Ties



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in his two-day visit to Pakistan met senior officials of the country to explore ways to boost cooperation.

Zarif yesterday first met Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and discussed regional security as former called on COAS at the army's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Zarif discussed matters of mutual interest, regional security situation including Afghan reconciliation process, Pak-Iran border management and border markets.

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Bajwa said that enhanced Pakistan-Iran cooperation will have positive impact on regional peace and stability. Zarif appreciated Pakistan's positive role for regional stability, especially Afghan peace process and pledged to keep working for better relations between two brotherly countries.

Zarif also met his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi. Qureshi, speaking to media along with his Iranian counterpart, said that Zarif would also meet Prime Minister Imran Khan.

"Like Pakistan, Iran also desires stability in Afghanistan," FM Qureshi said, adding that during the meeting, bilateral trade and the region's situation were discussed.

The foreign minister thanks Iran for backing Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

"Mutual consultation will further improve relations," Qureshi noted.

Meanwhile, Iran's Zarif said that his country was satisfied with the support they had received from Pakistan.

"Immigration, counter-terrorism, and other issues were discussed," he added.

Earlier in the day, Zarif arrived at the Foreign Office for a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

Among other issues, the foreign ministers discussed the coronavirus pandemic situation in both countries. Qureshi sorrow and regret over the loss of lives in Iran and praised the country's efforts in effectively containing the spread of the virus.

Both sides conferred on the development of political, economic, and international cooperation between the two countries. Referring to the deep historical and cultural interests between the two nations, Zarif voiced Iran's readiness to expand its relations with Pakistan in all the fields.

He welcomed Pakistan's decision to open new border markets to develop trade relations between the two countries and added that the Islamic Republic is ready to discuss new ways of trade exchange.

The Iranian diplomat also emphasized the significance of constant consultations regarding the security of border areas. Pakistani Foreign Minister further maintained that his country seeks to expand economic cooperation with Iran.

Qureshi extended condolences to Zarif on loss of lives in Iran due to coronavirus and lauded the steps taken by the Iranian government to control the spread of virus.

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Indian Companies Dreaming About Restarting Iran Oil Imports

TEHRAN (MNA) – An Iranian diplomat says Indian companies are eager to resume oil imports from Iran.

Speaking in an interview with The Hindu, Iran's Deputy Chief of Mission in India Masoud Rezvani answered a host of questions, including the future of Iran-India oil cooperation in case the US administration is changed and sanctions relaxed.

"Well, this is essentially a commercial decision as well as a political one. We believe that Iran's proximity to India makes the best sense for the Indian market. Because of our close relations, we used to sell our crude oil to India on credit, so India could process and even resell it, and pay us in time," Rezvani said.

"Short time of 7 to 8 days for crude oil delivery to Indian ports is also something unique which gives adequate assurance on availability and accessibility of oil resources. In addition, as we used the Rupee mechanism, the money we received from India was used to purchase goods from India. Market, and so it benefited much of Indian foreign trade and economy," he added. "On U.S. presidential elections, it is premature to say what will happen next. We believe our bilateral relations especially in trade and investment, should not be linked to the third parties and I do think that for Indian companies, in spite of the increase in purchase of oil and gas from the U.S. market, restarting oil import from Iran, is still something they dream about," noted the envoy.

The United States, under the Trump administration, has imposed severe sanctions against Iran, especially targeting the country's oil export, after unilaterally withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018.

Meanwhile, the initial results of the U.S. Presidential race indicate Joe Biden's win which can potentially mean the return of his administration to the deal. Tehran has highlighted that Washington should lift all sanctions and compensate for the losses inflicted on Tehran over the past three years before returning to the agreement.

U.S. Urged to End Arbitrary Detention, Harassing Iranian Citizens

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's Permanent Ambassador to Vienna-based International Organizations said that the United States should end arbitrary detentions and harassment of Iranian citizens.

Speaking in a session of periodical review of situation of human rights in the United States during a meeting of Human Rights Council on Tue., Kazem Gharibabadi stressed the need to end arbitrary detentions and harassment of Iranian nationals abroad under the pretext of political activities and violation of illegal U.S. sanctions.

Gharibabadi called on the United States to terminate widespread and systematic racism against coloreds especially the black people in the U.S., to stop arbitrary killing in various parts of the world especially by drones and also to punish the perpetrators of assassination of Iran's top general martyr Qassem Soleimani and his companions.

He also called on the United States to cease unilateral actions and illegal sanctions imposed against other countries, saying that illegal U.S. sanctions will cause widespread human rights violation.

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U.S. Exports to Iran Drop 50%

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - In its latest monthly report released on November 4, the United States Census Bureau said that U.S. exports to Iran in the first nine months of 2020 amounted to \$29.6 million, amounting to less than half of the same period last year.

Iran imported \$65 million from the U.S. in the first nine months of last year.

During this period, Iran exports to the United States totaled \$3.5 million, a low figure compared to the same period in 2018, when Iran had about \$70 million in exports to the U.S. and over \$300 million in imports from the U.S.

Major U.S. exports to Iran included medical equipment, medicine, and food. Iran's total trade with the United States was roughly \$33 million through September, a drop of approximately 34 percent from the same month one year ago.

The change in exports was down 41 percent, and imports declined by 94 percent. Iran ranked No. 182 among U.S. trade partners in September, compared to No. 175 for the same month last year, the report said.

The top three U.S. exports were respiration equipment, natural or synthetic, and salts, ether, and medicines in individual dosages by tonnage.

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Iran Has Exported 700,000 bpd of Oil Since March

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's average oil exports have been 600,000 to 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) since March, an official from the budget and planning organization said on Wednesday, defying U.S. sanctions aimed at dropping Tehran's main source of income to zero.

Iran's oil exports have shrunk from more than 2.5 million bpd since the United States withdrew from a nuclear deal with Iran 2018 and reimposed sanctions.

"The average oil sales so far this (Iranian) year have been 600,000 to 700,000 barrels per day," Hamid Pourmohammadi told Iran's semi-official Fars news agency, without providing further details. The Iranian year began on March 20.

Iranian authorities have said Washington's "maximum pressure" policy aimed at halting Iran's oil exports have failed as Tehran has been working to get around the measures and keep exports flowing.

Citing three assessments based on tanker tracking, Reuters reported this year that Iranian oil exports had risen sharply in September, although the figures fall into a wide range of between 400,000 and 1.5 million bpd.

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Iran, Netherland Hold 4th Consultation Meeting

TEHRAN (IP)- In their fourth political consultations, Iran and Netherlands' deputy foreign ministers stressed the need to strengthen trade cooperation, using the existing mechanisms.

In the meeting held virtually on Tuesday, Abbas Araqchi and Van der Plas discussed the most important international developments and addressed the issues related to bilateral ties and grounds for political, economic, and cultural cooperation.

Both sides also exchanged views on the new post-election situation in the United States.

The third round of political consultations between the two countries was held in November 2009 in the Hague of the Netherlands.

U.S. Election Results Show Half of Americans Back Trumpism Ideology

TEHRAN (IFP) - Seyyed Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, says the U.S. election results show half of the US population supports President Donald Trump's mindset and mentality.

Araqchi said the outcome shows fifty percent of Americans favor Trump's wicked policies. "Whether Trump remain in office or not, half of the U.S. population support the Trumpism ideology, in which he regards himself as superior to the whole world and refuses any cooperation and withdraws from all international agreements and regards himself as the number-one person and is ready to sacrifice anything. I believe this shows American leaders are pushing the US society as well as themselves toward political decline. These are the things that the world is paying attention to," he said.

"Almost 50 percent of the U.S. population, i.e., around 70 million people, have voted for Mr. Trump despite all his characteristics. That means half of the US population supports his negative and wicked personality traits, his bullying policies and his breach of regulations. I think this should be reflected upon, and it can be a threat," said Araqchi.

The top official underlined the support of so many people for Trump shows the American society has been polarized.

"This election also unmasked another important reality, and that is the American society has been polarized. The US society has reached a point where there are two poles with almost the same weight, and these two poles are involved in a rivalry, and they cannot tolerate one another," he said.



"One can see a country which claims to have the biggest democracy in the world and the most ancient democratic traditions has come to a point where all the things that the US accused other countries of, are happening in that country itself," he said.

"They are now accusing each other of electoral fraud. They say the whole election process was rigged due to alleged irregularities. The candidates are bringing their fans onto the streets in a gang-like move. They are now facing the same things which they accused others of, and for which they ridiculed others," said Araqchi.

"These developments laid bare and shattered the false grandeur of American democracy and revealed their structural weaknesses," he added.

Iran Proposes Creation of Int'l Fund for Syria Reconstruction

TEHRAN (MNA) – In the International Conference on the Return of Syrian Refugees, Iran proposed the establishment of an international fund for the reconstruction of Syria.

Addressing the international event, Senior Assistant to Iranian Foreign Minister in Special Political Affairs, Ali-Asghar Khaji, proposed the establishment of an international fund for having Syria reconstructed.

Reiterating Iran's support for a peaceful resolution for the Syrian crisis, Khaji said: "The refugees' problems are the result of the imposed war on the Syrian people."

"The U.S.-backed terrorist groups do not let refugees exit al-Rukban camp," he added.

Khaji underlined that "Resolving the issue of Syrian refugees' return to their homeland is vital and should not be abused for money-making purposes."

"Those countries that have failed to implement their policies in Syria are boycotting the Syrian people using Caesar Act," he noted.

"The U.S. government has increased levying its inhumane sanctions on Syria, despite the concerns about the spread of the Coronavirus," he lamented.

"Iran insists on a political solution to the Syrian crisis," he repeated.

"To speed up the return of refugees to Syria, the international community is calling for increased aid and participation in the reconstruction of the country."

"Iran proposes to set up an international fund to rebuild Syria," he said.

The International Conference on Return of Refugees started activities at Umayyad Place, Damascus, on Wednesday to discuss the possible return of Syrian refugees to their country.

Syria's Security to Pave Way for Refugees' Return

TEHRAN (MNA) – Senior Assistant to Iranian Foreign Minister in Special Political Affairs, Ali-Asghar Khaji, met and held talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on the situation of Syrian refugees.

President al-Assad on Tuesday received Ali Asghar Khaji, senior assistant to the Iranian Foreign Minister, and an accompanying delegation.

Talks during the meeting concentrated on the International Conference on the return of Syrian Refugees to be held in Damascus as President al-Assad was briefed by the Iranian delegation on the vision of Iran towards this conference and its readiness to offer any support that could contribute to making it a success and solving this humanitarian file.

The Iranian delegation stressed that the improvement of security conditions on the Syrian territory to a large extent and the efforts exerted by the Syrian government to reconstruct what has been sabotaged by terrorism constitutes a strong basis to set off towards the return of all refugees.



Al-Assad affirmed that the conference will be an essential step in the track on which the government acts to end this file, particularly as the conference will propose the exchange of views and ideas with a number of regional and international parties.

The President stressed that the refugees cause is a Syrian one, but the solution to this issue does

not depend only on the Syrian government, but also on the extent of fairness of some countries that claim they defend human rights, but at the same time, they do not care to the difficult conditions that the refugees have lived throughout all these years and they are working hard to politicize this file and keep the refugees outside the Syrian territory as long as possible to exert pressure on the country.

The two sides also exchanged view points on a number of issues of political concern, including Astana talks on Syria and the Committee of Discussing the Constitution.

Iran Owes Its Authority, Power to Martyr Tehrani Moghadam



TEHRAN (MNA) – The Deputy Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force said that Iran owes its authority and power to the efforts of all the martyrs, such as General Soleimani and General Tehrani Moghadam who brought security to the country.

A ceremony held on the occasion of the anniversary of the martyrdom of General HasanTehrani Moghaddam (29 October 1959 – 12 November 2011).

In this ceremony, General Majid Mousavi said that today, the Islamic Republic of Iran owes its authority and power in the region and world to the efforts of all the martyrs, such as General Soleimani and General Tehrani Moghaddam who brought peace and security for the Iranian nation.

Referring to the enemies' move of preventing Iran from achieving missile power through imposing the toughest sanctions, General Mousavi said, "Today, however, with efforts of Martyr Tehrani Moghaddam, relying on indigenous knowledge and defense industry, Iran, After Russia, is one of the most powerful countries in the world in terms of missile power."

Hailing achievement of IRGC Aerospace Force in the fields of launch silos, missile system, short-range, long-range missiles and minitile missiles, he said, "Martyr General Tehrani Moghaddam's decision to rely on the domestic defense industry, based on leader's guidelines, was so fruitful for boosting Iran's defense power."

Known as the father of Iran's missile program, Tehrani Moghaddam founded Iran's long-range missile program and designed the Shahab, Ghadr, and Sejil missiles with an operational range of more than 1,000 kilometers. He martyred on November 12, 2011, in a blast at the Alghadir missile base at Bid Ganeh, 30 miles away from Tehran.

Export of Iranian Products to Vietnam to Surge

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said that country's export of non-oil products to Vietnam will increase.

Speaking in his meeting with the newly-appointed ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Vietnam on Wed., Hamid Zadboum said that export of Iranian products to this emerging market has been put atop agenda.

The two countries of Iran and Vietnam enjoy high potential and capacities to broaden bilateral ties in economic field, he added. He pointed to the readiness of his organization to offer any kind of cooperation with regards to dissemination of information on the latest trade decisions adopted for facilitating trade between the two countries and added, "As a strong

and effective arm of missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran overseas, Trade Promotion Organization of Iran will take necessary steps and cooperation in this regard."

Iran's new envoy to Vietnam Nazari, for his part, appreciated constructive interaction between Trade Promotion Organization of Iran and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and added, "Giant steps will be taken for strengthening relations between the two countries of Iran and Vietnam as well as development of Iran's market in this Southeast Asian country." A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked between Iran and Vietnam last year. In this MoU, it was emphasized on the significance of expansion of trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Iran Warns Europe of Drug Production Increase

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Secretary-general of Iran's Drug Control Headquarters warned that the increasing trend of industrial narcotics production in Afghanistan, led by western countries, will be in detriment of European and regional countries.

On Wednesday, a video conference was held with the presence of the secretary-general of Iran's Drug Control Headquarters Eskandar Momeni and Ghada Wali, the Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Despite the conditions caused by the spreading of coronavirus in the world and the imposition of oppressive sanctions against the country, the Islamic Republic has not stopped fighting against drug trafficking, Momeni said in the meeting. Hailing Iran achievements in the fight against narcotics, he announced over a 26-percentage increase in Iran's narcotics discoveries in the first six months of the Iranian calendar year.

During the mentioned period, 700 tons of narcotics were discovered throughout the country, he said, adding, "Recently a shipment of 2 tons of narcotics destined for European countries was also discovered."

In this regard, he expressed deep concern over the increasing production of industrial narcotics, especially glass in Afghanistan which is supported by the US and other western countries.

The continuation of such an increase will be in detriment of European and regional countries, he explained.

Ghada Wali, for her part, hailed Iran's great measures in the fight against narcotics and also called the Islamic Republic of Iran an important partner for UNODC in this field.

"As Iran enjoys valuable experiences in the field of narcotics confiscation, therefore we seek to cooperate with Iran in various fields and to transfer such Iranian knowledge to the countries of the region and the member countries of UNODC", she added.

Iranian Lawyers Back Detained Diplomat in Belgium

TEHRAN (RNA) - A group of Iranian lawyers in a statement supported Iranian diplomat detained in Belgium Assadollah Asadi.

The Iranian lawyers gathered in front of UN office in Tehran and presented a statement in support of Iranian diplomat.

The statement has so far been signed by 1,842 lawyers.

In their statement, Iranian lawyers protested against the measure taken by Germany and Austria which was against diplomatic norms.

They urged UN to hold responsible two countries with regard to violating the Vienna Convention on diplomatic immunity.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has categorically ruled out the unfounded allegations against Iranian diplomat in Belgium Assadollah Assadi.

In reaction to a Reuters news report on an Iranian diplomat, he noted that the countries involved in the case are accountable for violating the diplomatic rights of Iran's diplomat.

Iran regards the detention of Assadollah Assadi as an unlawful act and a violation of international law and the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention.

Blasphemy by a French Magazine, Example of Modern Ignorance

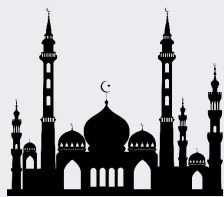
TEHRAN (IP) - The chairman of Iran's Islamic Culture and Communication Organization said the French magazine's insult to the Holy Prophet of Islam and the French President Macron's rude support of it is an example of modern ignorance.

The emergence of extremist groups in the world is an example of the ignorance that can shape a very bitter future, said Abouzar Ebrahimi-Torkaman.

He said, once in France, the law as knowledge flourished, and many countries adopted it to form their constitutions, but now officials in Paris are mongering hate.

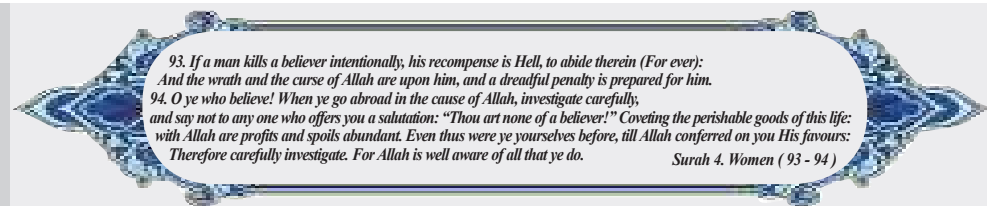
"A magazine did an ugly thing, and the President defends it instead of condemning that, hurting the emotions of 1.5 billion people. Isn't it modern ignorance?" he asked. He warned that if the Muslim countries ignore such blasphemies, they cannot stand against other insults in the future, stressing that the French government must pay the price for its hostile act.

The chairman of Iran's Islamic Culture and Communication Organization made the remarks on Tuesday in the webinar 'Challenges of Contemporary World: Hatemongering, Extremism, Terrorism, Islamophobia.'



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:48
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:18
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:12
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:38



Chinese Demands For Investment in Iran Rise by 80%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRA – Head of Iranian and Foreign Joint Venture Investments Association (IFJIA) says the demands by the Chinese for investment in Iran have soared by 80 percent this year and they are ready to invest in some projects that were never expected.

Speaking to ILNA, Hossein Seyed Hossein Salimi said that in the past years, the demands from Chinese for investment in Iran have been few but this year they have increased by 80 percent and they have shown more interests for investment in some projects that were never expected which were welcomed by the Chinese and these projects have profits to us, too.

On the effects of election of Joe Biden as the U.S. President, he said election of Biden has its impacts on the world and its impact has not been seen on Iran yet while the stock market indexes have grown in Europe and the U.S. but its impact on Iran's stock market has been negative.

Salimi said that Biden's election impact on Iran and its economy was transient as the dollar rate fell just for two days and it soared again.

He further said that since the outgoing U.S. President has imposed the maximum sanctions on Iran, it is expected after Democrat's taking power in the U.S., the sanctions are decreased and the business climate and market moves towards improvement.

Touching upon the decline in foreign investment in Iran, he said sanctions are the main reason because the companies both had obstacle in way of investment in Iran and had problem in transfer of money. He noted that since the big companies simultaneously had invested in the U.S. was unable to invest in Iran, too. He expressed hope by rejoining of the Biden Administration to the JCPOA and decreasing the sanctions, foreign investment would increase.

He then pointed to the sanctions of 28 Iranian banks which will come into effect from November 22 and said this will make complicated the transfer of money and



will increase the cost of money transfer because it has to be transferred through the channel like forex shops instead of banks.

Salimi admitted that Trump is still in the office and he will continue till early January and in case the Democrats fail to win the majority in the Senate, Biden will face problems in approving bills and dealing with Iran.

On the amount of applications for foreign investment in the country, he said since the beginning of the year and due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, application for investment has declined but since June, the demands have soared and it has almost been doubled comparing to the same period last year. He admitted that the number of licenses for investment has been doubled and they may fall when they come to the implementation phase.

Salimi added that in the past, applications for investment in mining sector have been few but this year Iran has received good bids for four and five mega mining projects and some of them have started and the Chinese are involved in them.

On the solar energy sector, the number of applications for investment has increased and they are mostly by Germans who are eager to invest in solar energy sector. He reiterated that Iran welcomes investment in solar energy projects.

Salimi noted that cooperation between Iran and China has opened the way for investment in Iran as the Chinese are hopeful for more investment in the country. He added that Coronavirus weakened Iran and China but they are currently recovering and the route for cooperation is opening.

First Iran-Made Escalators Deployed In Tehran Subway System

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Tehran subway system has started using home-made escalators to save nearly \$15 million in money spent on imports of equipment from abroad.

The Tehran Metro said in a statement on Tuesday that eight sets of Iranian-made escalators had been deployed for the first time to one of the stations along the seventh lane of the subway system earlier in the day.

"The indigenization of products used in the capital's underground railway system has been on agenda in recent times and fortunately today the manufacturing of the 100-percent Iranian-made escalator has come to fruition," said the statement.

It said an unidentified local company commissioned with manufacturing the escalators would supply a batch of 147 sets, all of them for use in the seventh lane of the subway system.

The opening of the 27-kilometer lane, which spans from southeast to northwest of Tehran, has been delayed in recent years reportedly because of lack of access to foreign-made equipment needed to finish the stations.

That comes as American sanctions on Iran have triggered a growth in local manufacturing of machinery and equipment needed in the construction industry.

Localized production of escalators come after reports earlier this year suggested that Iranian steelmakers had managed to produce special components used in manufacturing escalators.

Fathi Almas, a company based near Tehran, identifies itself as the only manufacturer of escalators in Iran and in the Middle East. The company signed a partnership agreement with a German manufacturer in 2016 to start local production for escalators and lifts.

A report by the official IRNA news agency said that escalators previously supplied from abroad used to cost the Tehran Metro around \$100,000 per each set, adding that the subway system had saved nearly \$15 million by using the services of a local manufacturer in its seventh lane.

Steel Ingot Production Volume up 8% in 7 Months

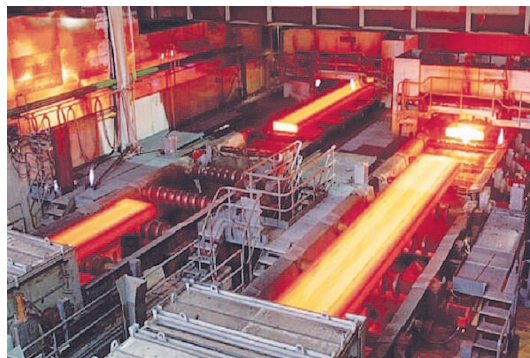
TEHRAN (MNA) – Steel ingot production volume and productions manufactured by major domestic steelmakers registered an eight and four percent hike respectively in the first seven months of the current year (from March 21 to Oct. 22).

According to Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), major domestic steelmaking companies including Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Company (EMSCO), Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC), Iran Steel Alloy Company, National Iranian Steel Company (NISCO), etc. produced 13,164,537 tons of steel from March 21 to Oct. 22, 2020.

Statistics showed that 1,921,616 tons of steel ingot was produced in the Iranian month of Mehr in current year (from Sept. 21 to Oct. 22).

In addition, large steelmaking companies produced 18,120,190 tons of sponge iron in the first five months of the current year, showing a 10 percent hike as compared to the same period of last year.

In the same direction, 2,549,805 tons of sponge iron was produced in the Iranian month of Mehr (Sept. 21-Oct. 22), showing a 19 percent growth as compared to last year's corresponding period.



No Iran Assets in Italian Banks Blocked

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Chairman of Iran-Italy Joint Chamber of Commerce Ahmad Pourfallah denied that Iran's assets in Italian banks have been blocked and claimed his words



during talks with ILNA news agency have been misinterpreted.

In reaction to his interview with ILNA, Pourfallah said that for many years Italy has been Iran's first partner in commercial relations and has fulfilled its obligations and no Iran assets have been blocked in Italian banks due to sanctions.

In his interview published by ILNA, Pourfallah had said that the amount of Iran's money in Italy is not as much as in the countries like China, India and Iraq but the blocked money belongs to the last oil consignments sold to Italy which has not been repatriated and it is not a big figure and it is around 4 or 5 billion dollars.

Now the chairman of the chamber says has refuted it and says Italy is one of Iran's good trade partners.

Iran Envoy Underlines Boosting Tehran-Muscat Economic Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Oman Ali Najafi stressed the need for promoting economic relations between the two countries in a meeting with the country's minister of energy and minerals Mohammed bin Hamad al-Rumhi late on Tuesday.

Referring to the existing capacities, Najafi called for promoting economic cooperation between the two nations.

Al-Rumhi, for his part, referred to historic bonds and friendship and brotherhood between Iran and Oman, stressing the need for deepening bilateral ties.

The two officials also discussed mutual cooperation in the field of energy.

Iran, Qatar to Boost Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Energy Ministry and Qatar's Water and Power Company on Tuesday stressed the need to strengthen mutual cooperation.

Mohammad Ali Farahnakian, advisor to Iran's energy minister for international affairs and head of the Center for International Affairs and Coordination of Water and Electricity Diplomacy of the Energy Ministry, met on Tuesday evening with Issa Al-Kuwari, CEO of Qatar Water and Power Company.

During the meeting, the two sides stressed the need to strengthen bilateral relations and described the previous talks and negotiations between the water and electricity sectors of Iran and Qatar as valuable.

They also agreed to pursue specialized discussions between the Qatari company and the relevant units of Iran's Ministry of Energy, so that both countries could achieve good results in the direction of close cooperation.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian arrived in Doha on Monday morning to submit Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's written letter to Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

Tehran, Kabul Need to Promote Cultural-Scientific Diplomacy

KABUL (IRNA) - Iran and Afghanistan need cultural and scientific diplomacy to develop ties to the level the two neighboring countries with longstanding amity deserve.

Afghanistan has been grappling with civil war and foreign invasion over the past four decades. The instability and unrest in Afghanistan has significantly affected the scientific and cultural output of the country, which requires further cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan as two neighbors with common civilization and cultural affinities.

Iran has provided an equal chance for Afghan immigrants living in Iran to study at Iranian schools and universities, it still seems we have not gone far enough.

Mohammad-Ali Rezvani, an Afghan scholar active in scientific and cultural areas, told IRNA that Afghan immigrants graduated from Iranian universities are considered to be a valuable asset for media, cultural, academic and research activities in Afghanistan.

He said that a large number of Afghan immigrants have now returned to their home country and are now active in their field of study.

Tehran, Kharkiv Ready For Barter Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iranian Ukrainian private sector activists in a webinar which was held in collaboration between Tehran Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Kharkiv of Ukraine explored ways for expansion of cooperation and decided to increase the current trade volume of less than one billion dollars to five billion dollars.

In the webinar which was held on Tuesday, over 70 companies from private sectors of Iran and Ukraine were present and both sides found the opportunity to present their capabilities and potentials for cooperation.

Head of International Affairs Department of Tehran Chamber of Commerce Hesamuldin Hallaj pointed to the close relations between Iran and Ukraine in the past decades and termed as appropriate the ground for developing economic relation between the both states and noted that economic activists of private sector of both states can take advantage of common capacities for improving the current trade.

He said bartering products and mineral materials beside bartering the oil and gas products and industrial equipment are of the good opportunities in front of the enterprises of both countries, and invited private sector of both countries in the fields of aerospace, industrial automation, mines, agro machineries and electric urban transportation vehicles as Iranian and Ukrainian companies are capable in them.

Meanwhile Iran Ambassador to Ukraine Manouchehr Moradi called for creating a condition for restoring industrial and economic cooperation between provinces of both states and noted that Iran embassy in Ukraine is ready to cooperate with private sectors in provinces of both countries to make them familiar with capacities and potentials for bilateral cooperation. He then pointed to the agreement of senior officials of both countries to boost the bilateral trade to \$5b annually, stipulating that Kharkiv Province of Ukraine can have considerable share of this relation.

Ukraine Ambassador to Tehran Sergey Burdylyak, for his part, said after the JCPOA and decreasing sanctions against Iran, the trade volume of Iran and Ukraine almost reached \$1b but after the start of the second wave of sanctions, the trade relation decreased. He added that despite sanctions, today they are witnessing the rise in the trade exchanges between Iran and Ukraine, and Ukraine exports to Iran are on the rise. He further said both countries can work together in exchange of technology beside agro products which are not under sanctions.

Meanwhile deputy head of Kharkiv Chamber of Commerce Ina Katiana addressing the webinar explained the economic and industrial capabilities of Kharkiv and announced readiness of Kharkiv Chamber of Commerce for offering consultation services to Iranian companies for entering the Ukraine market especially Kharkiv Province.

Katiana said private sectors of both counties can cooperate in the fields like construction industries, oil and gas, health and medical, automation systems, agriculture and chemical products.

Then economic activists participants in the webinar exchanged their views on the business and announced readiness for cooperation and began direct talks.



Erdogan Finally Congratulates U.S. President-Elect Biden

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday congratulated U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their victory in the 2020 presidential election, after years of rising tension between the NATO allies.

Bilateral ties have become strained over a host of issues, including Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 missile defence systems, differences in policy on Syria and the detention of U.S. consulate employees and citizens in Turkey.

But the personal rapport between Erdogan and President Donald Trump have kept relations from deteriorating further.



House Moves Trump Loyalists Into key Pentagon Jobs

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A day after President Donald Trump fired his defense secretary, the White House installed a Trump loyalist in a key Pentagon post on Tuesday and promoted another one who has falsely called former President Barack Obama a terrorist.

Trump announced his dismissal of Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Twitter on Monday, signaling he may use his final months in office to settle scores within his administration.

But the further reshuffling at the Pentagon is raising concern among Democrats about whether U.S. national security policy may become unsettled as Republican Trump exits office.



Biden Says Nothing Will Stop Transition



WILMINGTON (Reuters) - President-elect Joe Biden said on Tuesday that nothing would stop the transfer of power in the U.S. government, while President Donald Trump pursued lawsuits in several states in a long-shot bid to hold on to power.

Trump's campaign said it would file a lawsuit to stop Michigan from officially certifying Biden as the winner there until the state could verify that votes were cast lawfully, the latest in a flurry of lawsuits in battleground states to try to back up Trump's unsupported claims of widespread fraud. Legal experts have said Trump's litigation has little chance of changing the outcome, and state officials have said there were no significant irregularities in the Nov. 3 election.

Meanwhile, Trump supporters faced a possible setback in Pennsylvania. A witness who had raised accusations of ballot tampering recanted his allegations, according to Democrats in Congress who were briefed on the investigation.

Trump's accusations of fraud did not appear to be gaining traction with the public. Nearly 80% of Americans, including more than half of Republicans, recognize Biden as the winner, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll.

Top Republicans in Congress, including Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, said Trump had a right to challenge Biden's victory, and others echoed the president's unfounded accusations of widespread fraud. Privately, some aides said Trump would need to produce credible evidence soon to retain their support.

Biden secured more than the 270 votes in the Electoral College needed to take the presidency by winning Pennsylvania on Saturday after four tense days of counting, which was delayed by a surge in mail-in ballots due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Biden said in a speech in Delaware that his team was pushing ahead with forming a new administration to take over on Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, 2021, no matter what.

"We're going to be going, moving along, in a consistent manner, putting together our administration, and reviewing who we're going to pick for the Cabinet positions, and nothing's going to stop that," he said on Tuesday. Biden said it was an "embarrassment" that Trump has not conceded the election.

Taking questions from the media for the first time since his victory, Biden was asked what he would say if Trump were watching. He said: "Mr. President, I look forward to speaking with you."

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo predicted a "second Trump administration," in comments at odds with congratulatory phone calls from the leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Ireland to Biden.

Trump installed loyalists in top positions at the Pentagon, one day after firing Defense Secretary Mark Esper, which could potentially make it easier to use U.S. troops to respond to domestic protests.

France, Germany Push for Tighter EU Borders After Attacks

BERLIN (Reuters) - France and Germany pushed on Tuesday to tighten European Union borders to head off what French President Emmanuel Macron called the "threat of terrorism" after suspected Islamist militants killed eight people in Paris, Nice and Vienna within a month.

The attacks refocused the EU's attention on religious extremism, which fell off the top of the political agenda after the 2017 defeat of Islamic State forces in the Middle East.

Under pressure to beef up security and reassure voters following the latest attacks, Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Europe's troubled Schengen zone of control-free travel over open borders urgently needed fixing.

The attacks in Nice and Vienna involved assailants who moved freely between Schengen countries.

"The threat of terrorism weighs on all of Europe. We must respond," Macron said after discussing the matter with Merkel, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and top officials in Brussels, the EU hub.

"To reform Schengen is to allow free movement in security," Merkel sided with Macron in demanding stricter controls along the external frontier of the Schengen area, which brings together 26 countries, including most EU members as well as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

"It is vitally necessary to know who comes in and who leaves the Schengen area," she said.

National security concerns, chaotic migration into the EU from the Middle East and Africa in recent years and most recently the coronavirus pandemic have led to the re-emergence of some border controls in the Schengen zone -- eroding what has been hailed as a milestone achievement in Europe's post-World War Two integration.

Austria's Kurz also called for a more coordinated plan for dealing with foreign militants while Dutch premier Rutte emphasised stopping "undesirable" foreign financing as a further avenue to tackle extremism.

Other ideas include imposing stricter demands on online platforms to combat extremism, setting up a special European institute to train Muslim imams, and being able to effectively deport people with no claim to asylum in Europe as well as criminals and suspected extremists.

EU justice and interior ministers meet on Friday -- the fifth anniversary of coordinated attacks in Paris in which Islamist gunmen killed more than 130 people -- to discuss a joint security response to the latest incidents. Improving the sharing of security data and beefing up the bloc's border force Frontex are also on the EU's to-do list, according to their draft decision, which was seen by Reuters.



Italy Needs to Spend \$11.8b a Month on Lockdown Aid

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy needs to spend up to 10 billion euros (\$11.8 billion) a month on extra aid for businesses and workers during restrictions to contain the coronavirus, according to people familiar with the situation.

Government officials estimate that during lockdowns, the country requires support of at least 6 billion euros a month. Virus measures may have to become tougher through the winter, the people said, which would push the bill to the higher figure. That means a tougher lockdown running into March could cost 40-50 billion euros, the people said. That's about 3% of Italian GDP.

The government has already approved 8 billion euros in support this month, but the country is only in a partial lockdown covering a few regions. Spending would have to increase if virus cases rise and tougher restrictions are needed, said the people, who declined to be named because the discussions are confidential.

A Treasury official said that, at this time, only the approved spending plans and forecasts are confirmed.

While the November relief package will probably come from savings from previous packages and won't create extra debt, mounting expenses beyond that would likely have to be financed with additional borrowing.

Debt is already set to hit almost 160% of gross domestic product this year after Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte approved 100 billion euros in stimulus earlier this year to support businesses and families during the first wave of the pandemic.

U.S. Approves \$23b Advanced Arms Sale to UAE

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Trump administration notified Congress it has approved the sale of more than \$23bn in advanced weapons systems, including F-35 fighter jets and armed drones, to the United Arab Emirates, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said.

The formal notification to legislators follows a U.S.-brokered agreement in September in which the UAE agreed to normalise relations with Israel, becoming the first of three Arab states to make such a move in recent months.

"This is in recognition of our deepening relationship and the UAE's need for advanced defense capabilities to deter and defend itself against heightened threats from Iran," Pompeo said in a statement.

The \$23.37bn package includes up to 50 F-35 Lightning II aircraft, up to 18 MQ-9B Unmanned Aerial Systems and a package of air-to-air and air-to-ground munitions, the State Department said.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations and House of Representatives Foreign Affairs committees -- whose members have criticised UAE's role in civilian deaths in Yemen's civil war -- review major weapons sales before the State Department sends its formal notification to the legislative branch. Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat, criticised the arms sale to the UAE, saying it would constrain the options of President-elect Joe Biden who has signalled he will return the U.S. to the Iran nuclear agreement.

Any deal the United States makes to sell weapons in the Middle East must satisfy decades of agreement -- with Israel that the U.S.-made equipment must not impair Israel's "qualitative military edge", guaranteeing U.S. weapons furnished to Israel are "superior in capability" to those sold to its neighbours.

The announcement came just days after Biden won enough states needed to take the presidency from Trump, who made pro-Israel policies part of his re-election campaign.

Israel initially balked at the prospective sale of F-35 warplanes, valued at \$10.4bn, but dropped its opposition after what it described as U.S. guarantees that Israel's regional military superiority would be preserved.

The UAE, one of Washington's closest Middle East allies, has long wanted the stealthy jets and was promised a chance to buy them in a side deal when it agreed to normalise relations with Israel, part of a strategic regional realignment against Iran.

In the past, the F-35 has been denied to Arab states while Israel has about 24 of the jets. Israel is currently slated to buy 50 of the fighters.

"The proposed sale will make the UAE even more capable and interoperable with U.S. partners in a manner fully consistent with America's longstanding commitment to ensuring Israel's Qualitative Military Edge," Pompeo said.



India's Ruling BJP, Allies Win Regional Polls

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's governing party and its allies have won key state election seen as a barometer of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic downturn.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and his regional ally Janata Dal United (JDU) won 125 seats of Bihar state's 243-seat legislature, India's election commission website showed. A coalition of more than three political parties led by Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) opposed to the incumbent alliance managed to win 110 seats.

The result, which was announced on early hours of Wednesday, meant that Nitish Kumar from the Janata Dal United (JDU) will likely return as chief minister. He has been in the post since 2005.

Modi on Tuesday thanked people of Bihar for making a "decisive decision" to give development a chance. "I again assure every citizen of Bihar that for the balanced development of every person, every region, we will continue to work with full dedication," he tweeted. Bihar in eastern India is its second-most populous state and one of its poorest. Control of the key electoral battleground is seen as a referendum on Modi's popularity.

His opponents have criticised what they call his government's inept handling of the pandemic, which has led to more than 127,000 death so far nationwide. Modi's party and his alliance partner were pitted against the resurgent RJD party, led by a 31-year-old Tejashwi Yadav.

The young leader campaigned in an alliance with the Indian National Congress, the country's main opposition party and some left-leaning parties. The alliance made employment for youth its main election promise in the state where the unemployment rate is nearly double the national average.

Modi's party and his allies have focused on nationalistic policies. To win votes, the coalition leaders often evoked the erosion of Muslim-majority Kashmir's semi-autonomy last summer, the recent placement of a ceremonial cornerstone for a temple in central India on the site of a mosque that was destroyed by Hindu rioters decades ago and the ongoing border clash with China in mountainous Ladakh.



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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, blcony
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

Zaferanieh (\$2200) 220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F
Kamranieh (\$3000) 300sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F
Fereshteh (\$2000) 180sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F
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Boeing Loses More 737 MAX Orders

SEATTLE (Reuters) - Boeing Co lost another 12 orders for its grounded 737 MAX jetliner in October, and delivered 13 aircraft to customers, down from the 20 jets delivered in the same month a year ago, company data showed on Tuesday.

For the second straight month, the closely watched monthly snapshot revealed 787 Dreamliner quality flaws

and the coronavirus pandemic kept hampering Boeing's efforts to develop an alternative cash cow to the 737 MAX.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) appeared about a week away from lifting a March 2019 safety ban, although the pandemic kept hammering demand for jets from Boeing and European rival Airbus AIR.PA.



U.S. Job Openings, Hiring Point to Sluggish Labor Market Recovery

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. job openings increased less than expected in September while hiring fell, suggesting the labor market recovery was petering out even before a resurgence in new COVID-19 cases which is expected to slow momentum.

Though the Labor Department's monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS report on Tuesday showed layoffs decreasing to their lowest level in nearly 20 years, there was more than one person competing for a single vacancy. The drop is at odds with significantly high weekly unemployment claims. The worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, marked by tens of millions of Americans on unemployment benefits, is one of the biggest challenges confronting President-elect Joe Biden when he takes over from President Trump next January.

"It's hard to see any signs of backsliding, but there aren't any signs of acceleration in the recovery either," said Nick Bunker, director of research at Indeed Hiring Lab. "In a labor market with 10 million fewer jobs than February, we need to see hiring moving at a faster clip to avoid lasting damage."

Job openings, a measure of labor demand, were up 84,000 to 6.4 million on the last day of September. Vacancies remained below their 7 million level in February. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast job openings rising to 6.5 million in September.

Stocks on Wall Street were trading mostly lower. The dollar was steady against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasuries fell.

The United States is setting daily records for coronavirus cases, which could force state and local governments to impose new restrictions on businesses like restaurants, bars and gyms.

Even without restrictions, consumers fearing exposure to the respiratory illness are likely to stay away, which would hurt demand and hiring. At the same time, economic growth is slowing after a massive boost from fiscal stimulus, which has run out. The economy plunged into recession in February.

There were increases in job openings in financial activities, professional and business services, health care and social assistance, and leisure and hospitality industries. Federal government job openings decreased 20,000.

The job openings rate was unchanged at 4.3% in September.

"The virus count is hitting records however so it is questionable, given the new mini-lockdowns in many states, whether as many jobs will be required in the future at bars and restaurants, sporting events, museums and amusement parks," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFJ in New York.

Hiring declined 81,000 to 5.9 million, led by a 256,000 decrease in federal government as the 2020 Census winds down. Hiring also fell in retail trade and educational services. The hires rate dipped to 4.1% from 4.2% in August.

The JOLTS report followed on the heels of news last Friday that the economy created 638,000 jobs in October, the smallest gain since the jobs recovery started in May. Employment remains 10.1 million jobs below its peak in February. Millions of people are experiencing long periods of unemployment. The JOLTS report showed layoffs fell 200,000 to 1.3 million, the lowest level since December 2000. There were decreases in layoffs in the construction and wholesale trade industries.

Despite the ebb in layoffs, the number of Americans filing claims for unemployment benefits has remained above its 665,000 peak during the 2007-09 Great Recession. At least 21.5 million people were receiving unemployment benefits in mid-October. The layoffs rate fell to 0.9% from 1.1% in August. Even as layoffs moderated in September, job prospects for the 11.8 million estimated to be unemployed in September were rather bleak with only 6.4 million jobs available. "For every 18 workers who were officially counted as unemployed, there were only available jobs for 10 of them," said.

India Revives Plans to Offer Incentives for 6m Tons Sugar Exports

MUMBAI (Reuters) - India has revived a proposal to get sugar mills to export 6 million tonnes of the sweetener by incentivising overseas sales in the 2020/21 season, the third year in a row, as part of efforts to cut surplus stocks and prop up local prices, two government sources said.

As late as a few weeks ago India was considering giving incentives for sugar exports, but a delay in any announcement - made before Oct. 1 in the previous two years - prompted local mills and global traders to believe that the world's No. 1 consumer of the commodity has dropped plans to subsidize sugar exports this year.

The government is again considering giving incentives to mills to export 6 million tons of sugar in 2020-2021, but it has yet to agree the amount of subsidy, said two government sources, who didn't wish to be identified in line with official rules.

The government, which has sought the views of the sugar industry, is keen that cane growers' payments by sugar mills do not get delayed, the sources said.

Higher production has hammered prices, hitting mills' financial health and making it hard for sugar barons to make timely payments to cane farmers.

"Just like previous years, the subsidy is required to export sugar to ensure that farmers do not get to suffer," said one of the sources. "The subsidy details are still being looked into."

Although India is yet to decide on the exact amount of the subsidy, it is likely to be lower than last year, as global prices have jumped 13% since the current sugar season began on Oct. 1, both government sources and industry officials said.

In 2018 and 2019, India approved the sugar export incentive before Oct. 1 as New Delhi was pushing mills to sell sugar to clear dues they owe farmers.

In the 2019/20 season, an export subsidy of 10,448 rupees (\$142) a tonne helped India export a record 5.7 million tons of sugar.



Qatar, Singapore Sign Gas Deal That Details Pollution

DOHA (Bloomberg) -- Qatar and Singapore signed the first long-term liquefied natural gas deal that details pollution from the fastest growing fossil fuel.

The accord is the latest sign of how the gas industry is focusing on getting cleaner. Even if the fuel is much less polluting than oil and coal, the sector is under increasing pressure to reduce emissions as nations are seeking to meet strict climate targets.

Each cargo delivered under the 10-year agreement between Qatar Petroleum's trading arm and Pavilion Energy Pte will come with a statement of how much greenhouse gas emissions it caused. The accord covers as much as 1.8 million tons per year from 2023. There is no obligation for carbon offsets, but the intent is there to reduce emissions, Pavilion said.

"In the context of energy transition toward a low-carbon economy, this partnership is testament to the sustainability drive of both companies and the strong willingness of Pavilion Energy to pursue decarbonisation and offset strategies," Frederic Barnaud, the company's chief executive officer, said at the signing.

Pavilion Energy in March launched a tender, asking bidders to commit to help develop a methodology to quantify and report emissions in the LNG industry.

The methodology that will be used should cover emissions from the well to the import terminal and transportation. Pavilion Energy expects it to become a standard in the industry that's been lacking common and transparent practices of quantifying and disclosing emissions per cargo.

FAO, WHO Recommend Five Steps to Ensure Food Safety

TEHRAN (FAO) - While the ready access to safe and nutritious food is a basic human right, the recent estimations indicate that consuming contaminated food – with bacteria, viruses, toxins or chemicals – affects one out of 12 inhabitants of the earth, making almost 600 million people sick and leading to over 420,000 deaths per annum, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) report.

Unsafe food does not only causes through foodborne hazards over 200 acute and chronic diseases – from digestive tract infections to cancer – but its accumulated costs go far beyond human suffering, hampering socio-economic development, overloading healthcare systems and compromising the access to global food markets, trade, tourism and economic growth.

Considering these facts, FAO and WHO call on all the engaged stakeholders in production, process, sell or preparation of food, either being individual practitioners or corporate or government-level entities, to put continuous efforts in keeping the food safe. In this regards, the two UN agencies, particularly, recommend the below five ways in which stakeholders can make a sustained difference in food safety:

1. Ensure food is safe

National governments are critical in guaranteeing food is safe and nutritious for all. They have good reason to because unsafe food costs low-and middle-income economies alone about US\$95 billion in lost productivity annually according to the World Bank. To reduce these costs, policy-makers can promote sustainable agriculture and food systems, fostering collaboration among public health, animal health, agriculture and other sectors. Countries should follow the international standards established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

2. Grow food safely

To ensure a sufficient supply of safe food at global level while also minimizing their environmental impact and adapting to climate change, food producers need to adopt good practices. As food production systems transform and adapt to changing conditions, farmers must carefully consider optimal ways to address potential risks and ensure that food is safe. Integrating the plant and animal health, for example, can help to counter antimicrobial resistance and cut down on the 700,000 people worldwide who die from antimicrobial-resistant infections each year.

3. Keep food safe

For business operators, preventive controls can address most food safety problems. Everyone involved in food operations – from processing to retail – must ensure compliance with programmes like Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), a system that identifies, evaluates and controls for significant food-safety hazards. Beyond reducing the possibility of sickness, good practices for processing, storage and preservation can also cut post-harvest losses and



Bulgarian Economy May Contract More Than 4% This Year

SOFIA (Reuters) - The International Monetary Fund is likely to revise down its forecast for Bulgaria's economic growth given the sharp rise of the coronavirus infections in the past weeks, the head of the IMF mission to Bulgaria said on Tuesday.

In October, the IMF forecast the small and open economy to contract by 4% in 2020 and saw its unemployment rate at 5.6%.

On Tuesday, the Balkan country of 7 million people reported 3,816 new coronavirus cases, bringing the total to 78,976, including 1,771 deaths.

"Given the rise in infections under the second wave, we are projecting the Bulgarian economy to contract a little more than we thought it would in the October forecast," Jaewoo Lee told a virtual news conference upon concluding regular consultations with the Balkan country.

"However we do not expect unemployment to rise too sharply, mainly thanks to strong policy support," Lee said. Lee declined to make a specific estimate for the decline this year and said a new forecast would also depend on Bulgaria's economic growth in the third quarter. Bulgaria is to publish its Q3 flash estimate data on Friday.

Lee said years of prudent fiscal policies had allowed Sofia to support the health system, people and firms and said the country should further boost spending by temporary and well-targeted measures if infections increased further.

Bulgaria is targeting a fiscal shortfall of 4.4% of economic output for 2020 and a fiscal gap of 3.9% of GDP in 2021. About 2.5% of GDP in both years are earmarked for anti-pandemic measures.

Shell to Cut Jobs and Capacity At Major Singapore Refinery

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Royal Dutch Shell RDSA.L will halve crude processing capacity and cut jobs at its Pulau Bukom oil refinery in Singapore as part of an overhaul to reduce its carbon emissions.

The refinery on Pulau Bukom, a small island in the Southeast Asian city-state, can process 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil and is Shell's largest wholly-owned refinery worldwide. The move brings the total refining capacity cuts by Shell in recent months to 571,000 bpd, or just over a fifth of its capacity globally.

Shell aims to reduce the number of its refineries as part of a drive to slash carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions to net zero by 2050 and restructure its operations by reducing its oil and gas business and expanding its renewable energy and power division.

The coronavirus pandemic has destroyed fuel demand, estimated at 4.7 million bpd less during the next five years, and accelerated a rationalization of global refining capacity, Rob Smith, director at consultancy IHS Markit, said.

"Rationalization that would have been spread out over the coming decade will now be compressed within the next few years," he said.



help food retain its nutritional value as well as help business maximize their participation in a USD 1.6 trillion global food trade.

4. Check that food is safe

Consumers have the power to demand safe and healthy food. Given the complexity of food safety, consumers need access to timely, clear and reliable information about the nutritional and disease risks associated with their food choices. Investments in educating consumers about food safety have the potential to reduce foodborne disease and return savings of up to ten times of each dollar invested. Consumers need to be empowered to make healthy food choices for themselves and support sustainable food systems for the planet.

5. Team up for safety

Ultimately, food safety is a shared responsibility. Governments, regional economic bodies, UN organizations, development agencies, trade organizations, consumer and producer groups, academic and research institutions and private sector entities must all work together on issues that affect us. Collaboration is needed globally, regionally and locally – across sectors within governments and across borders when combatting outbreaks of foodborne illness globally.

FAO and WHO, being the lead UN agencies in promoting global efforts to enhance food safety and security and public health, calls on all involved parties to work together on these critical issues that affect all of us, now and in the future.

Fluctuation Is in Nature of Stock Markets

TEHRAN (IP) – Finance and Economic Minister Farhad Dehpasand said that fluctuation is in the nature of capital and stock markets.

Finance and Economic Minister Farhad Dehpasand, on the sidelines of the cabinet meeting in response to the reporters about the recent fluctuations in the stock market and government

actions in this regard, said: “Fluctuation is in the nature of capital and stock markets, in other words, this market is mainly based on shareholders and stock suppliers’ actions.”

He added: “The government is trying to move these fluctuations in the direction that indicators and activities become a stable and growing market with the laws it passes.”



EU Parliament, Gov'ts Reach Deal on EU 2021-2027 Budget

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Negotiators from the European Parliament and EU governments agreed the details of the 2021-2027 EU budget on Tuesday, in a crucial step for the activation of the bloc's 1.8 trillion euro (£1.6 trillion) recovery package to make the economy greener and more digital.

“A deal for Europe - Council and European Parliament negotiators reach political agreement on the EU budget & recovery package,” the spokesman for the German presidency of the EU Sebastian Fischer said on Twitter.

The deal, which took almost four months to negotiate, now needs to be formally endorsed by EU governments and the European Parliament.

This may cause new friction because the deal links access to EU money with respect for the rule of law -- a condition Poland and Hungary strongly oppose because they are under EU scrutiny for undermining the independence of the courts and media.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has sent a letter to the European Commission and the chairman of EU leaders Charles Michel threatening to veto the 1.1 trillion euro budget if the link between the money and the rule of law is not removed.

But senior officials said they were not sure if Hungary would do that, because such action would derail money for all of the 27-nation EU, including Hungary and Poland themselves, both of which were net beneficiaries of EU financial support.

Poland especially is among the largest recipients of direct EU subsidies for farmers who are the electoral base of the ruling nationalist PiS party. If Warsaw and Budapest bloc the next budget, the subsidies for farmers will stop.

“We will have to see whether anyone is going to block anything at all,” one senior EU official said.

The deal between parliament and government negotiators raises EU spending on health, education and security by 16 billion euros compared to the agreement of EU leaders in July.

It also establishes new, dedicated revenues for EU coffers so the bloc can repay the 750 billion euros it plans to borrow to help the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“By 2026, we will have a basket of new revenues that should be sufficient to cover the cost of the Recovery Fund's debt with the aim of not having cuts in funds and programmes,” said one of the parliamentary negotiators, Jose Manuel Fernandes.

Over the next weeks, talks between EU lawmakers and governments will continue



on the details of the 750 billion borrowing, of which 672.5 billion is to be distributed among governments as loans and grants on the basis of their national recovery plans listing various projects and reforms.

The parliament wants more of that money to be paid up front, before the projects reach agreed milestones and more of the cash to be earmarked for projects that help reduce CO2 emissions.

Lawmakers also want the cash to be available longer -- for four years instead of three. Once governments and parliament agree, the deal can be ratified by national parliaments in the EU's 27 countries and the money would start flowing in the second half of next year.

“The budget, the Recovery Fund, new revenues and the rule of law conditionality are one package for us,” said Siegfried Mursan, a senior MEP responsible for budgetary issues.

“Parliament will ratify today's deal only if Member States stick to all parts of the agreement,” he said.

UK Redundancies Hit Record High



LONDON (Reuters) - British employers laid off a record number of staff in the third quarter and the jobless rate jumped as the labor market weakened before finance minister Rishi Sunak made a U-turn on COVID support measures.

A record 314,000 British workers were made redundant in the three months to September, 181,000 more than in the second quarter, the Office for National Statistics said on Tuesday.

The unemployment rate rose to 4.8%, the highest rate since the three months to November 2016, from 4.5% in the three months to August, as expected in a Reuters poll of economists.

While the public and investors were cheered on Monday by news that an experimental COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90% effective in trials, the ONS data showed hard months lie ahead for many Britons.

Last week, Sunak was forced to extend his costly coronavirus furlough scheme, which provides 80% of the pay of temporarily laid-off workers, until the end of March, and he outlined billions of pounds in other forms of help.

“Unfortunately the extension of the furlough scheme didn't come soon enough for some workers but it should help stem the rise in unemployment over the winter,” said Jon Hudson, a fund manager at Premier Miton.

The BoE expects around 5.5 million employees will need furlough support during an England-wide lockdown this month, up from just over 2 million in October.

The end to the Brexit transition period in seven weeks' time has also weighed on employers' confidence, with no trade deal struck yet between Britain and the European Union.

Sunak said after the data was published that the ONS figures “underline the scale of the challenge we're facing”.

Sunak's critics have said his previous reluctance to extend the program led to unnecessary redundancies.

“The government's failure to face up to the scale of this jobs crisis in time has cost people their livelihoods,” said Jonathan Reynolds, the jobs spokesman for the opposition Labour Party.

Employment fell by 164,000 during the quarter, a sharper drop than expected.

Tax data also released on Tuesday showed a 33,000 decline in the number of employees in October, and almost 800,000 job losses since March.

Single Minded: All Set in China for World's Biggest Shopping Frenzy

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The world's largest online shopping bonanza began in China Wednesday with an army of workers and robots primed to sort packages, and international superstars hired to drive sales, on “Singles' Day”.

Conceived as an antidote to Valentine's Day, the event falls on the eleventh of the eleventh -- with all its ones -- and was meant to be an occasion for individuals to treat themselves to something new.

It has morphed into something else, however, and November 11 is expected to generate sales far outstripping the pre-Christmas “Black Friday” in the United States.

It will also be closely watched in China for signs of consumer sentiment during the coronavirus pandemic.

The event started in 2009 with apparel sales on e-commerce giant Alibaba's Tmall platform.

But in a nation of online shoppers, it now rakes in double what US retail giant Amazon does in a month, according to a recent report by consultants Bain & Co.

“Over the past five years, the ‘Double 11’ sales event has grown by an annual 35 percent, generating 410 billion yuan (approximately \$60.4 billion) in gross merchandise value for retailers and brands,” the report said.

At Alibaba's logistics hub, some 1,000 robots



hummed in readiness Tuesday, with an anticipated flood of orders.

In China, where the coronavirus first surfaced, the recovery in retail sales has lagged behind that of industrial sectors, with authorities and retailers trying to reignite domestic demand.

Alibaba -- quite literally playing on the numbers -- has this year extended “Singles' Day” from 24 hours to an 11-day shopping campaign.

And in a continued riff to hype the event, superstars such as Katy Perry have been hired to appear at an 11.11 Gala in Shanghai -- to be broadcast online.

Singer Taylor Swift and supermodel Miranda Kerr are also expected to take part in interactive live broadcasts with Chinese consumers. “Singles' Day sales stats could be a useful anecdote of rebounding consumption,” said Stephen Innes, chief global market strategist at Axi, in a report this week.

The Economist Intelligence Unit said it expects China's retail sales recovery to firm in the last three months of the year -- well supported by this shopping festival.

“China's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic before other major economies will also support consumer confidence,” it said.

Lebanon to Launch Digital Currency in Face of Economic Turmoil

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanon's central bank plans to launch a new digital currency in 2021 as part of a broader effort to combat a parallel economic and financial crisis that has engulfed the country.

Central bank governor Riad Salameh told a gathering of officials Monday that “We must prepare a Lebanese digital currency project” as a way to shore up confidence in the banking system.

“As for the monetary supply in the Lebanese market, it is estimated that there are \$10 billion stored inside homes,” Salameh said, according to the state-run National News Agency.

The central banker added that a digital currency project launched in 2021 will help implement a cashless financial system to enhance the flow of money locally and abroad.

Tehran, Islamabad...

FROM PAGE 1

On behalf of Pakistani nation, he paid tribute to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for supporting the just cause of Kashmiris for their right to self-determination.

Both foreign ministers expressed concern over the rising trend of Islamophobia in certain European countries, stressing that blasphemy was not acceptable in the garb of freedom of expression.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi stressed the significance of establishing peace and security on common border areas and noted that Pakistan will not allow anyone to take any hostile action against Iran. Regional developments, issues of the Islamic world, countering Islamophobia, regional cooperation, especially the strengthening of the ECO Organization, joint fight against terrorism and illegal immigration and facilitating pilgrimage, as well as the formation of a joint economic commission in the near future were among other issues discussed during the meeting.

Zarif concluded his visit to Pakistan by meeting Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

During the meeting, Pakistan Prime Minister emphasized the cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in stabilizing peace in the region and close cooperation for bringing peace to Afghanistan. He also called for boosting cooperation in fight against Islamophobia, helping Muslim world and bilateral cooperation.

Iran Policies...

FROM PAGE 1

He said Iran's policy is based on respect for other nations and noninterference in their affairs.

The president noted the country wants constructive interaction with the world, and seeks to fight terrorism and end unilateralism.

Rouhani said one of the reasons that incumbent Donald Trump failed to win the U.S. presidential election was that his administration was humiliated at the UN Security Council, which happened after Washington's anti-Tehran proposal was rejected outright by the Security Council's members.

Another reason why Trump lost, added Rouhani, was his mismanagement in the handling of the covid-19 pandemic.

Azerbaijan-Armenia...

FROM PAGE 1

“The conflict was a cause for concern, and it caused concerns along our borders. Even in certain cases, the conflict caused damage on our borders. There were some ensuing concerns as well, making it all the more necessary for the conflict to come to an end as soon as possible,” he noted.

The official noted that Iran has had good relations with both Baku and Yerevan.

“We have had age-old, cordial relations with both the Azerbaijan Republic and Armenia. Of course, our relationship has been closer with the Azerbaijan Republic because of our Azeri-speaking fellow countrymen. We have also had good ties with Armenia due to our Armenian compatriots,” he said.

Araqchi highlighted that Iran took it upon itself to help resolve the crisis.

“A war going on in our backyard between two of our neighbouring countries with which we have good relations was definitely an unfortunate event. Of course, that war has its roots in a historical conflict going on between Azerbaijanis and Armenians since old times. It was necessary that Iran play a role in easing or ending the conflict,” he explained.

“We put forward a proposal after holding consultations with all sides. Then I was tasked with introducing and seeking to build a consensus on the proposal during my trip to the region. We also sought to let these countries know about the concerns that the Islamic Republic of Iran had, so that they would know what areas Iran was concerned about,” Araqchi said.

U.S. Urged to End...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran's Permanent Ambassador to Vienna-based International Organizations also reminded U.S. to cooperate with the International Criminal Court to prosecute members of U.S. Army who have committed war crimes against humanity in Afghanistan and other countries, to stop complicity in war crimes and widespread human rights abuses in Yemen and Palestine by the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia as well as to halt arms sales to countries that systematically and extensively violate human rights and humanitarian rights in wars against countries such as Yemen and Palestine.

U.S. Exports...

FROM PAGE 1

The top three U.S. imports, also by tonnage, included carpets, sweaters, pullovers, vests and paintings, drawings, and other artwork.

The top three U.S. exports by value in September were medical instruments, medicines in individual dosages and respiration equipment. The top U.S. imports by value from Iran in the same month included almonds, walnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, and jams and jellies. Major Iranian exports to the United States in the pre-sanctions period prior to 2018 included carpets, pistachios and foodstuffs.

Meanwhile the United States on Tuesday imposed Iran-related sanctions on six companies and four people, accusing the network of supplying sensitive goods to an Iranian military firm in the Trump administration's latest move to increase pressure on Tehran.

In a statement, the U.S. Treasury Department accused the companies and individuals of facilitating the procurement of sensitive goods, including US-origin electronic components, for Iran Communication Industries, an Iranian military firm blacklisted by Washington and the European Union. The firm produces military communication systems, avionics and missile launchers, among other items, the Treasury said. Tuesday's action, taken under an authority that imposes sanctions on weapons of mass destruction proliferators and their supporters, freezes any US assets of those blacklisted and generally bars Americans from dealing with them.

“The Iranian regime utilizes a global network of companies to advance its destabilizing military capabilities,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the statement.

“The United States will continue to take action against those who help to support the regime's militarization and proliferation efforts,” he added.

Jovic to Pay Fine to Avoid Jail For Breaking Serbia Lockdown

MADRID (Reuters) - Real Madrid and Serbia forward Luka Jovic has agreed to pay a fine in exchange for a six-month jail sentence after flouting Serbian's COVID-19 restrictions, according to a court statement.

The court said the striker, 22, has been ordered to pay a fine of 3.5 million Serbian dinar, equivalent to around 30,000 euros, within a month in order to avoid prison. Jovic, who has scored only two goals since joining Real in a 60-million-euro move from Eintracht Frankfurt in 2019, returned to Serbia when the pandemic disrupted world sport in March.

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Prandelli Makes Fiorentina Return After Iachini Sacked

ROME (Dispatches) - Former Italy coach Cesare Prandelli has returned to the Fiorentina bench after 10 years away following the sacking of Giuseppe Iachini, the Serie A club announced.

Fiorentina said Prandelli would be back in charge of training on Tuesday, after his last spell with the 'Viola' between 2005-2010 when the club qualified twice for the Champions League.

Prandelli, 63, returns to the Tuscan club in the hope of igniting a season that has started miserably.

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SPORTS

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2020

Shapovalov Ousted At Sofia Open

SOFIA (Dispatches) - Canada's Denis Shapovalov ended his tennis season on a down note after being upset 6-2, 6-4 by Romania's Radu Albot on Tuesday in second-round action at the Sofia Open ATP 250 indoor hardcourt tournament.

Shapovalov, who was the top seed at a tournament for the first time in his career, was broken three times on six chances by Albot, who is ranked 81 spots lower than Shapovalov on the ATP Tour rankings at No. 93.

Albot, who only faced break point twice in the match and saved both times, posted his second victory over a highly ranked Canadian in a month. He beat Montreal's Felix Auger-Aliassime in the quarter-finals of an indoor tournament in Cologne, Germany in October.

The often inconsistent Shapovalov had another season of ups and downs in 2020. He broke into the ATP top-10 for the first time in his career after advancing to the quarter-finals of the U.S. Open and the semifinals of the Rome Masters.

But the 21-year-old from Richmond Hill, Ont., ended the season on a four-game losing streak, losing his first match in three straight tournaments following a loss to Andrey Rublev in the semifinals at an ATP 500 tournament in St. Petersburg.

Shapovalov finishes the season with a 17-15 record.

Later Tuesday, Vancouver's Vasek Pospisil faced fourth-seeded German Jan-Lennard Struff in a second-round match. Meanwhile earlier Adrian Mannarino recovered from a set down to book his place in the Sofia Open second round.



Mannarino will face Egor Gerasimov for a place in the quarter-finals. The Belarusian saved two of three break points to beat Viktor Troicki 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in one hour and 43 minutes.

In his first match on the ATP Tour, Jonas Foretek stunned eighth seed Marin Cilic 6-3, 6-2 to reach the second round. The #NextGenATP Czech converted four of his five break points to eliminate the former World No. 3 in 66 minutes.

Lucky loser Marc-Andrea Huesler saved two match points to overcome seventh seed Nikoloz Basilashvili 6-1, 4-6, 7-6(6). The Swiss landed 22 aces throughout the match to reach the second round. Huesler will face Marton Fucsovics or Jannik Sinner for a spot in the quarter-finals.

Vasek Pospisil also required a final-set tie-break to earn his first victory of the tournament. The 30-year-old, who recovered from 0/40 down at 5-5 in the final set, saved eight of 10 break points to beat Ilya Marchenko 6-2, 5-7, 7-6(5).

Pospisil will meet fourth seed Jan-Lennard Struff in the second round. The Canadian is tied at 1-1 in his ATP Head2Head series against Struff.

Salvatore Caruso produced a 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 comeback victory against Bulgarian wild card Dimitar Kuzmanov. The 27-year-old will meet second seed Felix Auger-Aliassime in his next match.

Neymar, Mbappe PSG Contract Talks Have Started

PARIS (Dispatches) - Paris Saint-Germain sporting director Leonardo said on Tuesday contract negotiations with Neymar and Kylian Mbappe are underway.

The deals of the attacking pair, who cost the French champions 402 million euros (\$474 million) in two separate transfers, are up in 2022.

Leonardo also said talks with Angel Di Maria and Juan Bernat are also ongoing.

"All the extensions we're considering, we've started to talk about. I think they'll escalate over the coming weeks," the former Brazil midfielder told the club's video channel.

He said his relationship with coach Thomas Tuchel has improved since they made their differing opinions about the summer transfer market public during media interviews.

The Champions League runners-up have lost two of their opening three group stage matches this term, but Leonardo denied PSG had looked at replacing the German.

"That sort of thing happens, we spoke, the situation is now clear for everyone," he said.

"The truth and the facts are that internally we've never thought about changing Tuchel. We've never called anyone," he added.

Babar Replaces Azhar as Pakistan Test Skipper

KARACHI (AFP) - The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Tuesday Babar Azam will replace the under-pressure Azhar Ali as Test captain in the two-match series in New Zealand starting next month.

Azhar was criticised following Pakistan's three-wicket defeat in England in August this year, losing the three-match series 1-0.

The PCB said Azam will now be the three-format skipper after assuming the Twenty20 role last year and one-day captaincy in May this year.

"Azam has been appointed as Pakistan Test captain, which now makes him the captain across all three formats. His first assignment will be to captain Pakistan on New Zealand tour," said a PCB release.



Shaw Out for Month With Hamstring Injury

LONDON (AFP) - Manchester United defender Luke Shaw is facing several weeks on the sidelines with a hamstring injury he picked up in Saturday's Premier League win at Everton.

The left-back limped off in the second half at Goodison Park, with manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer admitting at the time he looked "in a bad way".

United said in a statement on Tuesday that

Shaw, who has started seven matches in 22 days, would be out for a month.

As potential replacements, Solskjaer has Alex Telles, who has been restricted to one appearance following his move from Porto in October due to a positive Covid-19 test, Brandon Williams and Axel Tuanzebe.

United did not give updates on the fitness of defender Victor Lindelof (back) and Marcus Rashford (shoulder), who were also injured in the 3-1 win at Everton.

The pair are still scheduled to join up with Sweden and England for international duty.

Solskjaer expressed his fury with the fixture schedule after his side were forced to play at 12:30 pm on Saturday having returned from their Champions League fixture in Turkey in the early hours of Thursday, describing it as an "absolute joke".

Neuer Warns Fixture Backlog Has Players At Their Limits

BERLIN (AFP) - Germany captain Manuel Neuer said on Tuesday top players are at their physical "limits" due to this season's condensed fixture list resulting from the knock-on effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Neuer has already made 14 appearances for club and country in seven weeks since the campaign started.

"There has never been a season like this before and hopefully there will never be again," the Bayern Munich goalkeeper told website Sportbuzz.

Neuer gets a rare break on Wednesday with Eintracht Frankfurt's Kevin Trapp in goal for Germany's friendly against the Czech Republic in Leipzig.

However, the 34-year-old Neuer is expected to return for Saturday's Nations League match against Ukraine, and away to Spain on Tuesday.

With less than a month separating last season's Champions League final, won by Bayern, and the 2020/21 term, Neuer said top players have little time to rest with matches every three to four days.

"Certain training exercises are no longer possible - there is recovery after the game, a bit of tactics, the final training session, and then the next game is already on the agenda," he said.

However, he admits professional footballers should be grateful to be playing at all after Germany posted a record high 23,399 new cases of the coronavirus last Saturday.

"We as players should not complain, even if we have reached our limits - we're allowed to play, in contrast to many others (sports)," he said.

"We are very happy about it, you only have to look at the amateur footballers or dare to take a look at other sports," he added.

Germany coach Joachim Loew backed up Neuer and criticised the dense fixture list.



Gundogan Ready To Step Up on Germany Duty

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan said on Tuesday suffering from Covid-19 has changed his attitude to the outbreak as he prepares to feature for Germany.

The 30-year-old missed Premier League games in September after suffering with Covid-19, which he admits changed his thinking.

"I didn't take the coronavirus seriously before my illness - afterwards my attitude changed," Gundogan said ahead of Wednesday's friendly against the Czech Republic in Leipzig.

"It doesn't just hit you physically, but psychologically as well."

It was an "extremely unpleasant time" for the defensive midfielder, who felt "totally worn out" and his sense of taste "was completely gone".

Gundogan has recovered and feels back in his "rhythm" after scoring two goals in his last three Champions League games.

However, a phonecall from his anxious grandfather in Turkey shook him when he was ill.

"For me, it was worst when my grandfather called and cried for most of the phone call," Gundogan revealed.

"That showed me that he was very worried about me, but also for himself. I will never forget that conversation, because it touched me so deeply," he added.

Gundogan said he is now determined to do whatever he can to stop the virus spreading.

"We have a responsibility, we must not be selfish and we must protect ourselves as best we can," he added.

With Bayern Munich's Joshua Kimmich sidelined until January with a knee injury, Germany coach Joachim Loew said Gundogan is a "key player" for their Nations League matches against Ukraine on Saturday and Spain next Tuesday.



Ronaldo Fit For Andorra Friendly



LISBON (Dispatches) - Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo is available to face Andorra in a friendly later this week despite suffering an ankle injury in the weekend's draw at Lazio, Portugal coach Fernando Santos said on Tuesday.

Ronaldo, 35, who limped off with 15 minutes to play of Sunday's fixture in Rome, could also feature against France on Saturday and Tuesday's trip to Croatia in the Nations League.

"He trained normally with his team mates so if I decide it, he's fit to play the next three games," Santos said.

"He hasn't complained. I know since Sunday that there's no problem, nothing that could stop him from training normally," he added.

The former Real Madrid attacker has played three games for his club since recovering from coronavirus before the Nations League holders face a re-run of the Euro 2016 final against les Bleus.

Ronaldo's men top their group on goal difference ahead of this weekend's visitors to Lisbon.